

MOAI SIGHTINGS

THE *MOAI* IMAGE NOW can be seen on toothbrush handles! Colgate's "Lilo and Stitch" toothbrushes show one model with a brown *moai* face being held aloft by a blue creature with big teeth, apparently something called Stitch. Made in China, natch. Thanks to Tom Christopher who seems to shop in all the right places.



A GLUM CONCRETE *MOAI*, approximately 48" high, was spotted in another garden in Trenton, Ontario (obviously a hotbed of *moai* replications). Thanks to Marilyn Garrett Stearns for this one.

A VERY WHITE (PAINTED) *MOAI* standing in front of the airport at Arica, Chile, was snapped by Avonne Bradshaw. Arica is about as far as one can get from Rapa Nui and still be in Chile.



CALVIN MALONE REPORTED to "Moai Headquarters" about a "moai circle" in southern Oregon. He noted that, "There is a degree of uncertainty whether the circle has extra-terrestrial implications..." The *moai* are plastic heads, in varying colors, hanging around a gazebo.



LOST ISLAND ADVENTURE PARK IN WATERLOO, Iowa, is adding an "adventure golf" course, laced with "island" themes including a walk-through waterfall, Easter Island *moai* heads, a skull pit, a thatched hut, and "tribal totem poles". The owners expect 75,000 visitors this year and hope to add an island-style steel drum band or maybe an animal display.

AND FOR THE "GRANDDADDY" of all *moai* sightings, we hear about "...the only Terra Easter Island Land Art Face in North America. It's in the heartland of Mid-America. The area in question is 2 miles wide." We have been asked to help de-code this Satellite Image. *Duh*. Check out Satellite Discoveries, <http://missourimysterymound.tripod.com/regmound.jpg>

A *MOAI* SIGHTING ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT is causing a controversy. A sculptor, Clare Taylor, was commissioned to make a life-size replica of an Easter Island *moai* for the botanical gardens at Ventnor, Isle of Wight. She welded a massive 20-foot figure out of scrapped cars and had it erected on a cliff top, looking out to sea. She stated that the point of making it from old cars is that the Easter Islanders ruined the ecology of their island by chopping down all the trees, while we are destroying our environment with the motor car. Some locals however thought the statue an eyesore and a blot on the landscape. The well-rusted statue was taken down and placed in a compost heap while the controversy continued. Ms Taylor wants the statue returned to her, but it is now property of the Isle of Wight council. Ms Taylor, it is said, will be nominated for the 2003 Turner Prize for creating the statue, which may be re-erected elsewhere on the island. Stay tuned. (Thanks to W. D. Sherman for this item).

EBAY STRIKES AGAIN. Tom Christopher discovered a "Tissue Case" for sale on Ebay; it is in the shape of a *moai* head. One pulls a tissue from the *moai's* nose. Yuck. The advertisement states: "Laughter guaranteed! *Moai* tissue case is designed after the famous stone statues of Easter Island...and is a nice home accent. To use, simply place a tissue box to the case and pull the tissue out of *Moai's* nose. It is definitely a fun and one of a kind gift. In green or red." [Thanks but no, thanks.]

FROM AUSTRALIA COMES NEWS of a large wood *moai* carved by Rapanui islanders and presented to the Australian people as part of the 1998 multicultural celebrations. The *moai* was carved at the Chilean Ambassador's residence and then given to the Assembly where it was placed inside. The arts committee decided it should be outside, "like the Easter Island statues" [which are, however, of stone!]. The statue was refurbished and treated by an Australian artist so it can withstand exposure to the weather. The Chilean Ambassador, Cristobal Valdes, said he was proud to launch such a distinctive and important remembrance of his country's culture. Sr Valdes stated that "For some of you who may not have been on the island, some of these *moai* reach enormous proportions and the biggest of them weighs more than 82 tonnes." The event was celebrated with a ceremony featuring *Chilean* dancing. Thanks to Dan Gartner for contributing this item.

The Canberra Times, Oct 18, 2002

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PACIFIC

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS must be changed, according to the Secretariat for the Pacific Community who spoke on the need to balance population and resources. In the Pacific islands, only about 10 to 20 percent of those who leave school can find jobs. It was pointed out that the total population in the region is 8.3 million, but 5.3 million are in Papua New Guinea. There is deterioration in the balance between population and resources, and urban areas are becoming more crowded; governments find it difficult to provide infrastructure, and jobs are scarce.

Pacific News Bulletin 17(8) 2002

A SEVERE CYCLONE SMASHED INTO the remote South Pacific islands of Tikopia and Anuta, shredding trees and flattening buildings. Photos taken by freelance photographer and filmmaker Geoff Mackley showed walls and roofs ripped off buildings, lying amid shredded and toppled trees on the tiny island of Tikopia, which bore the brunt of Cyclone Zoe's 186 mph winds. Some 2,000 Solomon Islanders live on Tikopia, which is just three miles long, and the smaller islands of Fataka and Anuta. The storm, which cut radio links to the outside world, washed through some villages. Islanders fled to mountain caves for safety. People living on Mota Lava, 190 km southwest of Tikopia, appear to have survived; the situation on Anuta was unclear. Emergency shelter, food and medical supplies were delayed because of an argument with the crew of a Solomons' state patrol boat over unpaid wages. The Solomons' government is bankrupt and the national economy relies on foreign aid after years of ethnic militia fighting. It was announced on 9 January that the Cook Islands were giving \$10,000 for disaster relief work in the Solomons. Prime Minister Dr Woonton announced that, "We have all read in the newspapers and watched on television reports of the horrific damage caused by cyclone Zoe.... It brings back memories to us all of the enormous cyclone damage to Manihiki and other Northern Group islands a few years ago. At that time, many countries came to our assistance, for which we remain most grateful. This is the Solomon Islands' hour of need and on behalf of the government and all of the people of the Cook Islands, I will be sending to the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands today \$10,000 to assist in disaster relief efforts on the two islands."

Cook Islands News/PINA Nius, 9 January 2003

A 67-YEAR-OLD CALIFORNIA MAN was expected to reach Guam on 28 January, more than 6,000 miles and four months after he set out with his nephew 40 x 20-foot redwood raft. Andrew Urbanczyk started his journey in mid-September on the raft he calls the *Nord*. He drifted past the Big Island of Hawai'i in November - where his vessel was restocked with supplies - and then on to the Mariana Islands. His wife said he had originally planned to head to Japan from the Marianas and then back to California. But they lack funding so it appears Guam will be the final destination. She added that it is the first time anyone has ever taken a raft across the northern Pacific. This is not Urbanczyk's first brush with seafaring fame, although it is his first in a raft. He has sailed across the Baltic Sea, crossed the Atlantic in

an open lifeboat, sailed to Japan and back on a 27-foot sailboat, and then sailed solo around the world. The raft is said to have difficulty steering, so a tugboat was expected to meet the raft and pull it to Guam. It will be docked at the Marianas Yacht Club.

Pacific Daily News, January 28, 2003

YET ANOTHER REED RAFT, dubbed the *Viracocha II*, is under construction in Viña del Mar, Chile. Plans are set off across the Pacific in February with the hope to travel 10,000 miles. Seven Aymaras worked on the craft made of natural fibers. In charge is Phil Buck, who previously made a trip from Arica to Easter Island. The crew of nine will come from different nations. Plans are to stop at Easter Island, Tahiti, and Fiji for water and provisions. Their goal is Sydney, Australia.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso December 28, 2002

COOK ISLANDS

ARTIFACTS THAT MAY HAVE been made 800-1000 years ago were excavated from Avarua, situated on the *motu* Te Kainga, Rakahanga. The archaeologist, Anne Di Piazza, excavated 3 earth ovens (*umu*) containing charcoal, fish hooks made from pearl shells, a chisel made of clam, and a pounder made of coral. "I found the same artifacts in East Polynesia," said Di Piazza: "People settled in this part of the Pacific, maybe 2000 to 3000 BC."

Di Piazza, from the National Centre for Scientific Research in Marseilles, France, is basing her estimated dates on artifacts she has excavated on the Christmas and Phoenix Islands that were made with the same kind of shell. She has now returned to France where the artifacts from Rakahanga will be carbon dated, and then returned to the Cook Islands National Museum.

Ngatuaine Maui from the Anthropology Department of the Ministry of Culture stated that these finds are important for the people of the Cook Islands and will fill in links with the history of Rakahanga.

Cook Islands News, January 28, 2003

NAURU

TINY NAURU'S AMBASSADOR to the UN, Vinci Clodumar, said the United States has an "attitude problem". In referring to the US missile tests on Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, the desires of most Pacific Island countries to keep their region clear of nuclear weapons are being ignored.

Pacific News Bulletin, 17(9), 2002

GUAM

US FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICIALS unveiled a plan to designate 24,800 acres on Guam as critical habitat for three endangered species. But local Chamorro families are angry and frustrated because they want that land returned to them. The habitats are now under the jurisdiction of Anderson Air Force base and the Naval Magazine areas around Fena Lake. The species for which the habitats would be created are the Guam Micronesian kingfisher, the Mariana crow and the Mariana fruit bat. These three species were nearly exterminated by the brown tree snake that arrived in the 1940s, probably via military aircraft. In a hearing, irate locals expressed their anger, saying it is the Chamorros who are the endangered species.

Pacific News Bulletin, 17(10), 2002

FIJI

KAVA, CONSUMED TRADITIONALLY in the Pacific as a water extract, contains far less kavalactones than found in kava pills. The pills, when consumed in excessive amounts, have resulted in cases of liver toxicity in western countries, and this has led to a ban on kava imports from the Pacific Islands. The water extraction of kava mainly contains water soluble products such as carbohydrates, proteins and amino acids. Very small amounts of water insoluble kava resins containing kavalactones get through the filters. The alcohol extraction of kava roots yield 10-15 % kava resins, 50-60 % of which contain kavalactones, and such high concentration of kavalactones can result in liver stress. The water extraction of the same kava roots yield only 6-8% of kava resins. Testing of kava pills sold in the US and Europe reveal that the kavalactone concentration in each pill ranges from 32 to 55%.

*USP Beat, University of the South Pacific, Suva.
Vol. 2 (20) November 2002*

SUVA, FIJI. A French army transport aircraft and ship brought relief to populations stricken by cyclone Ami two weeks ago. The Nouméa-based transport aircraft brought some 1.5 tons of tarpaulins, water-purifying tablets, and other supplies to the island of Vanua Levu (North of Fiji) on Friday. Vanua Levu, and especially its capital town of Labasa, were heavily damaged by cyclone Ami on January 14. To date, the official toll of Ami is fifteen dead with another fifteen missing, and close to US\$30 million damage.

The French relief was also the result of close consultations between Australian and New Zealand armies that aims at coordinating actions in times of natural disasters in the Pacific island countries. Asked why the relief assistance did not come to Fiji more quickly, Carpentier said the military "could only respond to requests, mainly from the affected nations." "Having said this, you will appreciate that us, the military, cannot be seen as intervening on a friendly nation, all dressed up in fatigues... This could be misinterpreted", he added.

Before the government estimate came in, the local Red Cross and aid donors from Australia, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Japan, China and the European Union had announced financial aid packages and initiatives.

Oceania Flash/SPC January 28, 2003

BLEACHING OF THE CORAL REEFS worldwide may be linked to climate change. Over 400 cases of bleaching are linked to increased seawater temperatures, with the majority of bleaching records coming from the Great Barrier Reef, reefs in the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, Palau, the Seychelles, Belize, and the Florida coasts. Twenty countries in all the major oceans have documented over 430 cases of bleaching, making 2002 the 2nd worst year after 1998. Scientists, marine park managers and others are urged to provide data on bleaching

*Oceanic Waves, START-Oceania Information Bulletin,
4(4), 2002*

A 3000 YEAR OLD SKELETON was discovered at the earliest-known human settlement in the Fiji Islands by a team from the University of the South Pacific. The find, made at Moturiki Island in central Fiji was called the most important scientific find in Fiji in the past thirty years. The skeleton was found below

sixty centimeters of undisturbed sediments that contained Lapita pottery, making it the second Lapita-age skeleton ever to be found in the Pacific Islands. The skeleton is male, between 1.9 and 2 meters tall, and was buried with the head facing west. A large *trochus* shell was found below the neck. The settlement, the skeleton, and Lapita pottery was found at Naitable on the southeast coast of Moturiki. The discovery follows earlier finds of Lapita pottery at this site. The designs on the Lapita pottery from Naitabale are unlike those found previously in Fiji, most closely resembling those found on pots made around 1550 to 1250 BC in the outer islands of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. It was suggested that the oldest Lapita pottery from Naitabale was likely imported from the Santa Cruz/Reef Islands area about 1250 to 1000 BC. This makes it the oldest Lapita pottery found in Fiji, marking "the first footprint" in those islands. Following study, the skeleton will be reburied at Naitabale, with permission of the chief of Uluibau.

SBP Beat, Vol. 2(14) for August 2002

INCREASED INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY in the Pacific area by foreign fishing vessels is causing concern. However, most island states have no choice but to open up their waters to fishing by foreign vessels because they lack the resources to fish and process the fish on their own. Depletion of fish stocks is a growing concern.

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TUNA RESOURCES CAN BE CONSERVED FOR the future if at least thirteen Pacific Island states agree to enforce the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention. The convention, adopted in Hawai'i two years ago, would ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the regions migratory fish stocks. So far, only four states, including Fiji, have ratified the agreement. Fifteen other states have signed, but not ratified the agreement.

USP Beat, Vol. 2(16), 2002

A PACIFIC ISLANDS CONFERENCE of Leaders, held at the University's Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji, called for official recognition from the United States of native Hawaiians as a distinct people with their own language, culture, and government. Representing the "Kingdom of Hawaii", Keao NeSmith said that there are numbers of native Hawaiian organizations working to reestablish and recognize a sovereign native Hawaiian Nation.

USP Beat, Vol. 2(17) 2002

TAHITI

THE LUXURY SHIP *Windsong* was disabled in December by an explosion and fire in its engine room, causing all 127 passengers to be evacuated at five a.m. The alert was given when the ship was 12 miles north of the island of Taha'a. Passengers were transferred to Taha'a, and then were flown to Pape'ete. The president of French Polynesia and 3 of his ministers sent three trucks to the condemned ship and loaded up all the valuables including TVs, ship's steering wheel, etc. One truck was stopped by a guard and unloaded; the other two got away. According to law, the president has the right to salvage ships in territorial waters, but only if such order is delivered by the President in person, which is what he did.

Tahiti-Pacifique, No. 140, December 2002

HAWAI'I

CRUISE SHIPS AND MOLOKAI. Molokai is now a stop for passenger cruise ships, giving some Friendly Isle residents hope about lifting their slumping economy. But the scheduled arrival of the *Statendam* is also stirring opposition among those who fear a potential adverse impact on the ocean and reefs off Kaunakakai Harbor.

Members of the group Hui Hoopakela Aina said they worry about oil pollution and alien species being introduced from ocean waters released from the vessel's ballast and they complain that the community wasn't given the opportunity to participate in an environmental review. Coast Guard Lt. Robert Haggerty, who supervises marine safety on Maui, said there was virtually no danger of alien species contamination from the ships because passenger ships do not normally take on and discharge water from their ballast. An official with Quay Cruise Agency representing the *Statendam*, said the vessel is inspected by the U.S. Coast Guard and has complied with all environmental regulations. The *Statendam* stopped at Molokai on a 12-hour visit on December 28. In 2003, the arrivals occurred on January 22, April 15, and tentatively again in November. Other passenger ships stopping off at Molokai in 2003 included the *Amsterdam* on April 18 and *Royal Princess* on December 13. The Holland America Line, operator of the *Statendam*, describes Molokai as the "less-touristed island" and the "itinerary highlight" in its 16-day Circle Hawai'i cruises. The advance promotion on Holland America's Web site says that once on Moloka'i, passengers may go deep sea fishing or explore the island's scenic beauty, history and ancient places of worship. Other activities include mule rides to Kalaupapa and a *hoolaulea* with food and entertainment at Malama Cultural Park near Kaunakakai Harbor. The director of the Molokai Visitors Association said the passengers aboard the *Statendam* will be generally an older retired group. She expects about 600 of the 1,000 passengers to visit Molokai, an island with an estimated population of about 7,000 residents. These early visits will determine if Molokai will remain a regular stop. A lot hinges on how things go. Molokai's unemployment rate was 9% in September, a 2.6 % improvement over the same month last year, following 9-11 and a drop in tourism. Zhantell Dudoit, whose business is helping to organize the *hoolaulea*, said she feels that there are environmental concerns but she also believes there is room for a compromise. "We need the business," she said.

THE HOKULE'A HAS BEEN RESTORED and is ready to return to Pacific waters to resume its sailing adventures. The Polynesian Voyaging Society was able to reach their goal of the \$100,000 required for the restoration. Plans are to sail to the remote northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The voyage will be "statewide" as they will begin at Lo'ihi (the newest Hawaiian Island, still forming under the sea just south of Hawai'i Island) and travel all the way to Kure in the northwest Hawaiian chain.

AN ALIEN EEL, 39 inches long and weighing ten pounds, was found on Maui. It may have been brought in ballast water aboard a ship and managed to reach the pond, or it might have crossed the ocean on its own, from its nearest native area, Tahiti. The eel moves from salt to fresh water, and is found in the

Indo-Pacific region as well as in South Africa. State laws prohibit its importation. A Maui boy fishing in the pond was stunned to find this creature on his spear. No one at the Department of Land and Natural Resources had seen anything like it, so it was sent to the Bishop Museum and was been identified by scientists as *Anguilla marmorata*, a giant mottled eel, harmful to native creatures.

Honolulu Advertiser, January 27, 2003

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

THERE WAS A MURDER ON RAPA NUI for only the third time in 120 years. The crime left the island community reeling from shock. Alberto Tepihi Hotus killed his wife, Maria Ika Pakarati, with a knife and then tried unsuccessfully to kill himself. There had been a history of spousal (and substance) abuse in the relationship and she was planning to leave him. This calamity might have been prevented; however, there is little social support in Chile (or on the island) for women who try to use the law to protect themselves and their children from domestic violence. Theoretically, there are severe legal constraints against abusive spouses, but in practice the *carabineros* are reluctant to intervene. Even then the woman has to press charges, and often she won't because the legal system discourages her from doing so. In earlier times the family structure was capable of some level of control (albeit inconsistent) over the more common sort of domestic violence, such as threats against the abuser by members of the spouse's family. But, today families are in disarray and that rarely happens.

MANY OF THE HARE MOA AROUND the island have been rebuilt and a replica "ancient village" is also being built inland from the *ahu* at Te Pito Kura. These "restorations" are being done by



View is of the "entrance" to *ahu* Te Pito Kura; the stone wall prevents vehicles from entering the site. A newly rebuilt *hare moa* in on the right (Photo: G. Lee).

local youths with no archaeological input.

THE INTERNET CAFE ON Atamu Tekena has closed, and as a lot more people seem to have gotten computers in the last year, the Entel internet connections are very slow. It is still possible to check email in the mall next door to the market, Kai Nene (formerly called Tumu Kai) on Atamu Tekena.

A NEW BAR/PUB CALLED ALOHA has opened in the village. It features live music on Friday nights. Another local pub, called Banana, is said to have a rather rough clientele.

VANDALISM TO A FALLEN STATUE at Vinapu has been reported, and the culprit was identified as a tourist from Japan. He was

allowed to leave the island but now the National Parks is trying to extradite him for a trial. The cost of repairs will be thousands of US dollars.

THE VILLAGE *MERCADO* HAS BEEN EXPANDED but is still stifling. Whoever designs the island's buildings has no concept of ventilation. The other market, a *feria* or "open market" at the corner of Atamu Tekena and Tu'u Makehe consists of roofed over stalls and display areas and is being used for the sale of curios and carvings. Formerly planned as a place to display and sell fruits, vegetables, and fish, islanders are instead selling these perishables from the backs of pickup trucks, ranged along Atamu Tekena, across the street from the government structure. This appears to be in protest, but of what we could not determine.

BOTH OF AHU TONGARIKI'S huge wings have been restored. The size of this *ahu* is awesome. Visitors should walk around behind the *ahu*, on the east end, to see the collection of statue fragments found during reconstruction. This most interesting collection should be in the island museum.

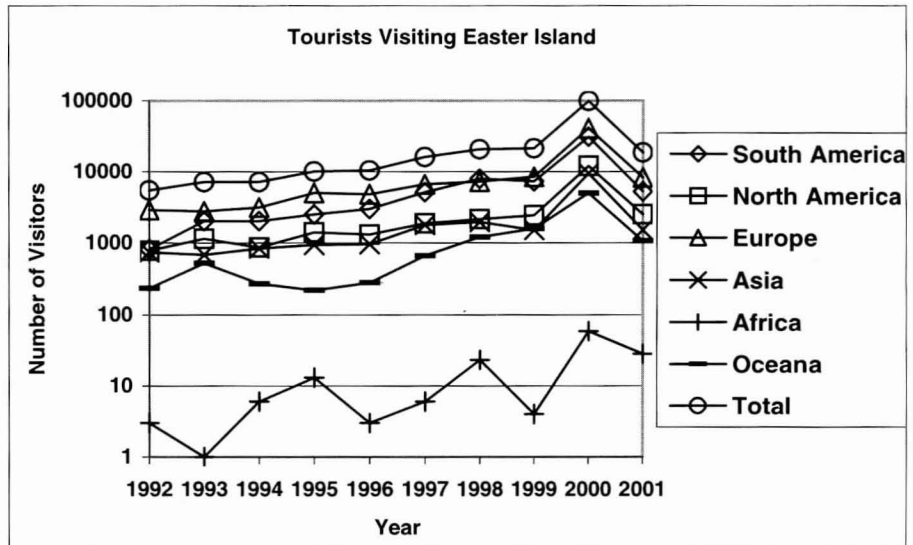


View of Tongariki from the huge east wing. Photo: Adele Norton.

THERE IS NEW CONSTRUCTION all over Hanga Roa village. What these buildings are intended to be is unclear. But as tourism is down dramatically, many projects begun when the good times were rolling may not be completed very soon. None the less, small shops up and down the two main streets are open and, for the first time, we noted some two-story houses around the village.

AN OUTSIDE ATM MACHINE now stands in front the island's bank on Tu'u Makehe Street, but it only accepts Bank of Chile cards and Mastercard.

WHILE THE PAVING OF THE STREETS in Hanga Roa progresses, the roads to Akivi, Puna Pau, and to Orongo are still unpaved. Along the south coast, the road is paved to the eastern side of Poike peninsula. This portion of the road is a big improvement as the short stretch that runs along the Poike peninsula was notorious for turning into mush when it rains.



The numbers of tourist arrivals (1992-2001) to Easter Island are shown above but they do not include in-transit passengers or ship arrivals which do not discharge passengers. A large drop in tourists from all countries occurred between 2000 and 2001. Tourists from the USA went from 10,902 to 2,271. The figures by courtesy of Sernatur, Isla de Pascua.

AHU AKIVI HAS BEEN CLEANED UP, providing the site with a much more attractive ambience. The weeds and shrubbery were cut back and the ramp weeded. On the down side, Vinapu is still overgrown with 'cho-cho' a nasty plant that is toxic to animals. The heavy brush cover nearly obscures the entire site of Vinapu 2.

THE PLAN TO BUILD A 5-STAR HOTEL with golf course at Vaitea, in the center of the island, is still being pushed by a few individuals. While a "Canadian Consortium" is said to be behind it, word is that the big backers are wealthy investors from Santiago. Nearly all the islanders are against this scheme and concerned Rapanui are pleading for help to stop the project. An article in *El Mercurio* stated that: "The warm Polynesian climate and the fact that it is one of the richest areas of marine wildlife in the Pacific Ocean have whet the appetite of Canadian businessmen who plan to construct the hotel. Rapanui Mayor Petero Edmunds Paoa has endorsed the plan which would be built on 100 hectares in Rapa Nui's center, an area known for its beautiful countryside. The project will require an investment of more than \$US 7 million, and the hotel will have 100 rooms with additional luxury areas for VIPs like a golf course."

One of the main concerns with the project is that the hotel would deprive locals of work and separate tourists from the village area. "We want people from the island to work on the land, which would not be the case with this project," said businessman and President of the Easter Island Tourism Chamber, Pedro Riroroko. "One of the Mayor's arguments for building a hotel here is that it would give people work, but we know that the hotel's own (foreign) personnel would be brought in," he said. Mayor Edmunds described the economic benefits that a luxury hotel would bring. "With a hotel like this we could hold conferences like APEC [sic] forums here," he said.

Another project being proposed by the Chilean/Canadian/Consejo de Ancianos group, is a "floating hotel" that would be

attached to a pier. In exchange for permission to build this floating hotel, supporters of the project have promised to build the pier, a drainage system for the island, and to give school grants (and other guarantees). There are few examples of floating hotels so little is known as to how it may be affected by ocean currents and storms. There also are considerable potential environmental impacts. Damage to the coastline and the ever-present dangerously high surf would make this a highly unstable project. Where the pier and floating hotel might be situated was not specified and the issue of sewage was not mentioned. Easter Island's Port Authority was horrified. Mayor Edmunds still prefers the Vaitea 5-star hotel project and has asked the government for assistance with that project.

WE WERE TOLD THAT THE VILLAGE cemetery is now full with no room for expansion due to the bedrock formations surrounding it. One islander plaintively asked, "Where will we be buried?" The only other option, at this moment, is the old cemetery near the former leper sanatorium.

THE JAPAN-UNESCO PROJECT for the conservation of archaeological sites on Rapa Nui began recently. The main purpose of the project was established after a meeting on the island amongst the scientific committee which included archaeologists William Ayres, Gonzalo Figueroa and José Miguel Ramírez, conservation experts Masaaki Sawada and Mónica Bahamondez, and engineer Mauricio Sarrazin, the National Council of Monuments and UNESCO representatives, along with the participation of Rapanui authorities. This purpose is not restoration but preventive maintenance of the many *ahu* that are in the process of deterioration. Due to the fact that the large Tadano crane is broken, the only works that can be accomplished are those that do not require the use of the crane. These include Ahu Hanga Hahave, Ahu Tahai, and Ahu Hanga Tetenga. The original project had targeted Ahu Te Pito Kura for restoration but that idea has been dropped. It was decided to work on the stabilization of the platform and the archaeology of the area. A small unnamed *ahu* (site 6-253 after McCoy 1976) located at the entrance to Hanga Te'e (Vaihu) was protected with a retaining wall 40 meters in back of the *ahu* to avoid any further erosion. The work was done by islander Rafael Rapu and his team. José Miguel Ramírez, from the University of Valparaíso, was in charge of documenting the process. A canoe ramp that is located 45 meters to the west of the *ahu* was also stabilized. But more threatened sites will need stabilization also: Ahu Ura Uranga Te Mahina, the wings of Ahu Akahanga, Ahu Hanga Poukura, Ahu Hanga Te'e, Ahu Tepeu, the recuperation of the fallen *moai* at Ahu Runga Va'e, etc. Dr Ayres is expected to be working on the island beginning in January 2003.

THE TWO DIVE SHOPS at the *caleta* (Orca, and Mike Rapu's Dive Shop) have various types of gear for rent, including wet suits, scuba gear, and kayaks. The dive shops are side-by-side facing the caleta. Many visitors to the island are unaware of the excellent opportunities for scuba diving around the island, and are pleasantly surprised to find such up-scale equipment available. The diving is said to be particularly good in the waters off Motu Nui and Motu Iti.



Michael and Henri Garcia's Orca Dive Shop, located at the *caleta*.



Mike Rapu's Dive Shop at the *caleta*. (Photo by G. Lee)



A new firehouse is under construction on Te Pito te Henua street, next to the Post Office. The new building replaces the old corrugated metal garage that formerly served as a fire house. (Photo: G. Lee)



A "rogue's gallery" of famed archaeologists who met, for the first time all together, on Rapa Nui last November. From the left: Christopher Stevenson; Sonia Haoa; Michel Orliac; and Paul G. Bahn.

OTHER NEWS

EASTER ISLAND MOAI FOR SALE

The Chilean Government launched an investigation after it was discovered that a Miami art gallery has a collection of Easter Island artifacts for sale. The gallery claimed that the carvings are up to 1,000 years old. Authorities in Chile claim the artifacts were not authorized to leave the country and they are asking how two one-ton *moai* sculptures managed to make it all the way from Easter Island to a small art gallery in Miami, Florida – where they are for sale for as much as US \$1,000,000 each. According to Miami's Cronos Art Gallery, the hefty artifacts (680 kg and 952 kg respectively) are part of a private collection owned by Hernan Garcia Gonzalo de Vidal, a former high-ranking official during Pinochet's military dictatorship. Garcia apparently shipped the items to the United States in 2001. The Gallery's website claimed that one carved head is 1,000 years old and the other 700, but these age estimates have since been withdrawn and the ages now are listed as "unknown". There has been speculation that they could sell for \$600,000 each. In addition to the *moai*, the gallery is also selling 14 other items from Garcia's collection, including a stone tablet – one of only 24 in existence – that contains samples of the Rapa Nui people's now-lost *rongorongo* writing.

Garcia's collection, claimed Cronos Art Gallery owner Jose Manuel Perez during a recent interview with *El Mercurio*, is the world's most important private collection of archeological and artistic Polynesian antiquities. Garcia claims that his family has owned the *moai* since the early 1900s, before they were declared to be national heritage property in 1925, and over the years he simply bought many of the other artifacts. Others were supposedly given to him by island residents and by the former regional governor during the Pinochet-regime, Sergio Rapu, who offered the gifts in recognition of Garcia's demonstrated record as a benefactor to Easter Island and the Rapa Nui people. More than 14 years ago Garcia shipped his collection to Santiago with permission from the Rapa Nui people. However, then-governor Rapu told *El Mercurio* that he does not recall approving the transfer of the items.

According to other gallery documents, before sending the objects to Miami in 2001, Garcia "obtained administrative permission from the Council of National Museums as required by Chilean law." However, no such council exists, and the organization that the documents may have meant to refer to, the Council of National Monuments (CMN), insists vehemently that it never authorized the items – considered national treasures – to be removed from Chile. "We have never authorized a private collection of original pieces from Easter Island to leave the country. Never! We've only allowed pieces to be loaned abroad with specific dates of exit and entry stipulated," CMN Executive Secretary Angel Cabeza told *El Mercurio*.

According to Cabeza, the statues for sale in Miami are either fakes or were removed from Chile illegally. "If it's true that Mr. Garcia ...took the pieces in question and if these pieces really are what they are supposed to be, they couldn't have been taken from the country without our authorization. We, furthermore, have never received a request of that type," he added. CMN plans to launch an investigation to determine if the *moai* and other items are forgeries, in which case the issue would likely become a matter for authorities in the United States, or

whether they were illegally removed from Chile. Garcia, who was described in 1989 by the magazine *Que Pasa* as one of the infamous "Group of Ten" – powerful figures who opposed constitutional reforms and worked hard to keep Pinochet in power – currently resides in Miami. However, following all the recent publicity, he has "disappeared", claiming a "family emergency".

The latest word, direct from Angel Cabeza, is that Rapanui artisans made these most of these years ago and that their creators recognize them. It is possible that a few items may be original; Dr Adrienne Kaeppler of the Smithsonian Museum will go to Miami to study the objects. However, at this time, the art gallery is closed, the gallery's owner is out of touch, and Garcia is not to be found. Cabeza adds that, "These people have real legal problems: if the objects are authentic, there was illegal traffic in both Chile and the United States. If they are not authentic, the art gallery is guilty of false advertising."

REVIEWS

BBC TV: *Horizon: The Mystery of Easter Island*

Review by Paul G. Bahn

BRITISH TELEVISION HAS JUST SCREENED a new Easter Island documentary from BBC's "Horizon" stable, which had already made a double-program on the subject more than ten years ago. When I was first contacted by the new program makers, I was told that (a) they wanted to focus on the new work and new ideas that have arisen in the intervening years, and (b) in particular they wanted to assess three conflicting theories about the island's downfall – i.e. the manmade ecological disaster model, the natural ecological disaster model, and the theory that it was European impact which caused all the trouble. What we get in the finished show, however, is somewhat different from these early intentions.

For a start, and the source of greatest disappointment, is that the second of these theories is not even mentioned! Although Michel and Catherine Orliac were contacted at an early stage, their hugely important work and their theory have been completely ignored, which is astounding. Similarly, most of the interesting recent work by other specialists is absent: there is no Fischer, no Stevenson, and Love's work – despite his occasional presence on screen – is likewise passed over in complete silence.

Instead, what we get is a fairly pedestrian, generalized canter through the island's story. There are some new touches here and there – for example, it was good to see Hagelberg discussing her DNA analyses, Steadman with his bird bones, Owsley with his evidence for violence in human remains, and Rapu telling the story of the discovery of the eyes. There is a particularly nice scene of Love standing in one of the holes on top of Rano Raraku.

One of the silliest wasted opportunities is a passing reference to the debate concerning how the statues were moved; brief snatches of Van Tilburg and Love are intercut, with each arguing their corner – Van Tilburg still claiming that the statues were moved horizontally, and that her way is best, while Love,